

# THE CADDIE SUNDAY SCHOOL IS A PERFECT GOLF PARTNER

by

EDDIE WILLIAMS

*Golf Professional,  
Louisville Country Club,  
Louisville, Ky.*

**E**ARLY Sunday morning golfers carry their own clubs at Louisville Country Club. There are plenty of caddies around, but they are not for hire—that is, not until the boys have returned from the caddie Sunday School held at the ninth green.

Started several summers ago, the caddie Sunday School is now an honored tradition at Louisville Country Club. It offers each boy an opportunity to continue working as a caddie without forfeiting the benefits to be derived from Sunday morning religious services.

This unique Sunday School, thought to be the only one of its kind in the country, is the direct result of the sincere concern of the Professional at Louisville Country Club over the fact that caddies were unable to attend their respective religious services on Sunday morning, due to their presence at the golf course. After devoting considerable thought to the situation, the matter was brought to the attention of the Reverend Edwin Perry, pastor of the Broadway Baptist Church. Mr. Perry agreed with the Professional's thoughts on the situation, and suggested that a combined effort be made to "bring the church to the boys." This was the beginning of the caddie Sunday School.

## Non-Sectarian Service

During the first summer, Mr. Perry arranged for students of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to conduct services of the caddie church. Since the boys represented many religious backgrounds, the service was non-sectarian. Several of the boys were attending Sunday School for the first time.

No sanctuary was needed. It is doubtful that a more perfect natural setting could

have been found than the area around the ninth green of the Louisville course. The pulpit was the broad expanse of the green; the pews, a shaded, sloping bank at the green's edge. From where they gathered for the service, the boys could look down neatly trimmed fairways, lined by majestic trees, swaying gently in the morning breezes. It was quiet, beautiful, inspiring—an ideal place of worship.

In this setting, the "ninth hole Sunday School" soon became an established part of caddie life at Louisville Country Club. However, the climax of its success was yet to come. It remained for Bernie Alwes, a professional sign painter, to completely capture and maintain caddie interest in the Sunday School.

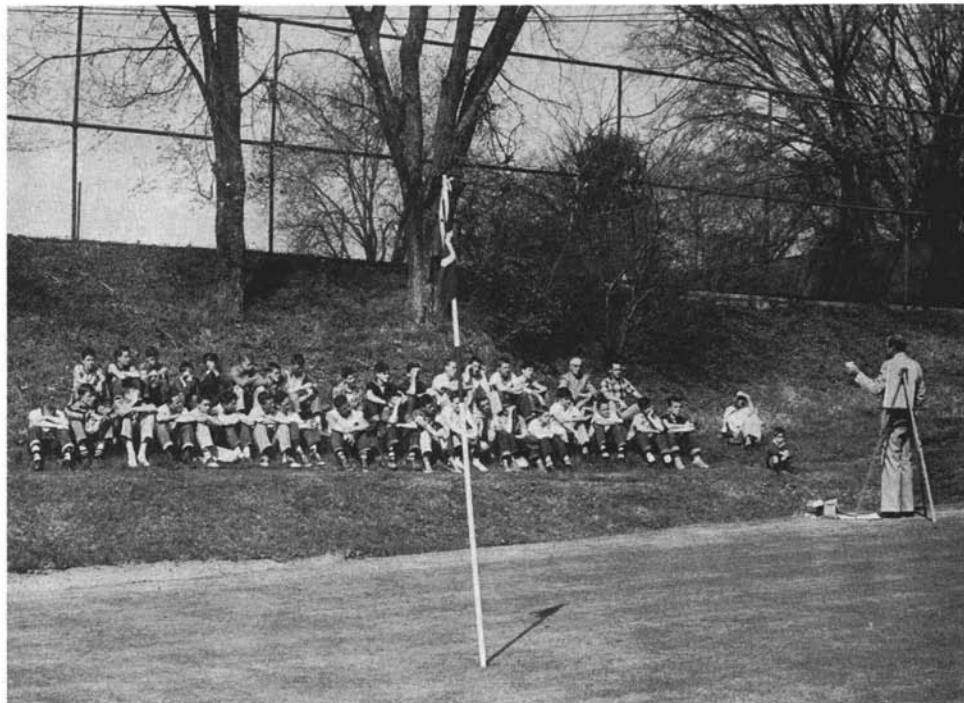
Late in the first summer, Bernie appeared one Sunday morning to give one of his well-known chalk talks to the boys. He walked to the ninth green with them, placed his easel at the edge of the green and began the service. Deftly drawing pictures as he talked, Bernie's approach to religion strongly attracted the attention of his congregation. They all liked it and they all wanted more of Bernie. The attraction was mutual and Bernie agreed to return the next Sunday. He's been returning every Sunday since.

## A Former Caddie

No theologian, Bernie relies on his experiences, personal observations and artistic talent to bring the message to the boys. He, too, grew up in the same area and caddied at Louisville Country Club from the time he was 12. He understands the problems of boys, particularly caddies, and his presentations find in them an appreciative audience.

In a typical service, Bernie talked to

## Ninth Hole Sunday School



*A Louisville Courier-Journal Photo.*

*Members of Louisville Country Club's Caddie Sunday School listen intently as Bernie Alwes delivers another of his chalk talks. Services are held at the ninth hole location every Sunday morning during the summer.*

the boys about "the size of God." Illustrating his point, he drew pictures of a huge man, towering over a tree and a house. Then he acknowledged that "nobody knows how big God is." He drew on his experiences in the Navy during World War II in a brief, direct, understandable talk. As he closed with a prayer, the only noise was the chirping of the birds as the boys bowed silently.

After each service, Bernie stays for a while to talk informally with the caddies. He gets to know them pretty well and tries to maintain contact, particularly during the winter. One Christmas he personally visited the home of each boy to present him with a pocket knife. The club sees that Bernie is remunerated for his services. His efforts have been successful. The caddie Sunday School opens each summer with Bernie at his easel, and a

steady, interested congregation waiting to share the message.

### **Club Members Delighted**

Louisville Country Club members are delighted with Bernie's success, and steadfastly maintain that the benefits of the Sunday School are lasting and noticeable ones. Club members have frequently commented on the markedly improved behavior of the caddies on the course. They are content to credit the lessons taught at the Sunday School for the improvement.

There are important lessons of life to be learned, if one is so inclined, in the game of golf. To these lessons, the club Professional has added those of religious significance to be learned in the Sunday School. They make a perfect match. The young men privileged to enjoy both can only be better men for the experience.